A DISCOURSE OF THE VANITY OF THE CREATURE

By a Perſon of Honour.

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To ſpeak of nothing, is no good motive to attention; yet, to offer you a Diſcourſe of leſs than nothing, may invite your ears, whilſt Curioſity may raiſe an expectation; and that may make you tarry to hear. What this may be, you'll find it in my Text.

Eccleſiaſtes I. Verſ. 2.

Vanity of Vanities, (ſaith the Preacher) *Vanity of Vanities, all is Vanity.*

THE Text is a deſcription of all worldly things; there is not any thing which falls not under this: the Hebrew hath it, *moſt vain vanity*; all the creſted Plumes of Honour, all the Treaſures of the Univerſe, with all the delights and pleaſures of it, extended and ſumm'd up by a moſt able and moſt experienced Accomptant, amount unto no more than *Vanity of vanities* (ſaith the Preacher,) *Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.*

Obſervable in the words are, firſt an *Aſſertion, Vanity of vanities.*

Secondly, The *Aſſertor* (ſaith the Preacher.)

Thirdly, The duplication of the Aſſertion, *Vanity of Vanities.*

Fourthly, The Univerſality of the Aſſertion, *All is Vanity.*

But is not Man, at leaſt-wiſe, the great Men of the Earth, excepted? Are not Kings and Rulers of the Earth, whoſe pompous Trains and numerous Attendance, ſtriking awe and terrour in the Beholders, ſerious things? And if ſingle perſons be not, are not Armies with Banners terrible? Are not the Nations of the Earth, when united, great and conſiderable? And if all theſe things were not ſo, is not the flux of Mankind the propagation of Ages to come? Immortality, which is denied to perſons, yet granted to the kind, a noble and magnificent thing? Some one might think thus: Did not a King inſpired with a divine Oracle ſay, *That every man in his beſt eſtate is altogether vanity?* not only ſome men, but every man; not only every man in a low condition, but in his beſt eſtate; not only in reſpect of mutable dependencies, which make bright Fortunes britler, but altogether vanity. As for the heaps of Mankind, they

they ſerve but for their own oppreſſion, and are like thoſe in throngs, where every one ſtrives to be foremoſt, although they know the moſt muſt come behind; and what is this Combination of men but a great bubble? *All the Inhabitants of the Earth are reputed as nothing: all Nations before God are as nothing, and they are accounted to him leſs than nothing and vanity*; they are altogether lighter than vanity; and then what is it but to be leſs than nothing, and that is vanity. Negation of a Being is in ſilent darkneſs, but vanity is a cheat, a counterfeit of a Being which is not: *Why wilt thou ſet thy heart upon that which is not?* And as to the immortality annexed to the kind, what is it but the production of mortality, ſince the generation of one muſt be the corruption of another, and ſo no otherwiſe can pretend to a notion of immortality but by perpetuating death? And if the Maxim be true, The whole Nature of the Species is preſerved in the Individual of the kind; the Species or kind may be ſaid to dye when the Individual doth, and ſo properly would, were there not others to ſupport that notion: and this is all that *Chimerical* Immortality. When *Xerxes* muſtered his numerous Army of five hundred thou-

Dan. 4. 35. Iſa. 40. 17.

Pſal. 62. 9.

ſand men, (if we believe *Herodotus*) it is ſaid he wept upon the conſideration of their approaching *Funerals*, which was to be diſpatched, as to every member thereof, within one Century, though it fell out much ſooner: whereby it appeared, that there was no force comparable to that of death, which ſwept them all away.

We ſhall now deſcend to examine the words more particularly in reſpect of the Honours, Treaſures, and Pleaſures of this life, and ſearch if either of theſe can evade from this ſevere cenſure of *Solomon*. *Vanity* is an appearance of ſomething which is not; Honour hath the Trappings of this World, it commands the caps and knees of men, it hath the attendances and dependencies of Suitors and Followers; it hath the breath and applauſe of multitudes; when *Herod* ſpeaks, *It is the voice of God and not of man*, crys the people. The Deſcents and Genealogies of ſome have been boaſted, and endeavoured to be propagated even beyond Mankind. *Julius Cæſar* ſaid that by his Fathers ſide he was derived from Kings, by his Mother from the Gods; and how many beſides *Hercules* and *Achilles* have pretended to ſuch Lineage? The Emperours of *Conſtantinople*, as to their

their Extraction, were held ſo Noble, that it was ſaid of them, they were all ingendred of Purple, forgetting the ſeat we have in the womb, *inter ſtercus & urinam.* Of which *Pliny* ſays, *Fœdius ſterquilinium nuſquam videtur*; yet muſt all this be forgotten, and by the vain, ſo well as fooliſh pride of man, claim muſt be laid to Divinity it ſelf. So *Alexander* the Great feigned himſelf greater by an extraction from *Jupiter*, and through the flattery of the Prieſts of *Jupiter Hammon* muſt be owned as his *Off-ſpring.* A ſorry *Clearcus* of *Pontus* would be no leſs than *Jupiter*; *Latian Ulyſſes*, to encounter the Argument of *Ajax*, who pretended a deſcent on the one ſide from the Gods, aſſerts himſelf on both ſides to be ſo deſcended, *Deus eſt in utroq; parente.*

Volumes may be made in ſumming the Pretenders to this kind of Poetical Heraldry; I ſhall only refer theſe extravagant Pretenders to what all of them have now felt, being a better record of the deſcent of men; *I have ſaid to corruption thou art my father, and to the worm thou art my mother.* Job 17. 14. And as there is a vanity in theſe impoſſible pretences above mentioned, ſo is there in the Pageantry of the Genealogies among men. The ancient

cient *Britains* muſt have no leſs Founder of their Race than *Brutus* the *Trojan*, if *Geffrey* of *Monmouth* may be believed, and ſingle perſons would ſtrive to be of kin to ſome famous perſon or houſe by the moſt evident concluſions of truth and reaſon, not remembring the Poet herein to be a Prophet; to wit, *Majorum primus quiſquis fuit ille tuarum, aut paſtor fuit, aut alius quem dicere nolo*; and this is vanity in *Mood* without a *Figure*, but when we ſhall ſee this improved to a challenge and belief of Immortality, he, as *Ptolomy Philadelphos* ſaid, that he had found the way to live always upon earth. We may then think *Solomons* multiplication very proper, as to theſe things; *Vanity of vanities.*

Now as ſome men boaſt of their deſcent, though our bodies are made but of a mud wall, and all Nations are made of one blood, and all perſons deſcended from one man, ſo others pretend to honour with their actions by conquering Kingdoms, deſtroying Armies, making many wretched, multiplying the number of the dead; burning Cities, deſtroying houſes, uſing cruelties, changing Governments, trampling down Laws, thinking they have much honour when they have much

much power, and are then truly great when they have made ſuch little; but what is this more than to be Butchers of men? Is it brave to exerciſe *ferine* cruelty on our fellow Creatures? Is it a bleſſed condition to make others wretched? to uſe the natural force, common with beaſts, and leave the moral, proper to man? Can it be thought brave to be a great Thief (as the Pirate told *Alexander*) and infamous to be a little one? Is not the Sword bloody enough, unleſs it kill whole Nations? and muſt glory be acquired by the deſtruction of States? How much better were it ſaid of *Pericles* the *Athenian*, ſirnamed *Olympius*, which title, ſome ſay, was given him for his ſupereminent eloquence. Other Writers, for this, that being long a powerful man in *Athens*, he never abuſed his power ſo far, as to cauſe any Citizen to wear a black Gown; where then is the honour of theſe Executioners of the World, theſe general Hangmen and Butchers of Mankind? Is not that office held ignominious among men; albeit theſe are uſually the Miniſters of Juſtice, they of injuſtice? Doth the *Crown* endure to all generations? Are they not often made the *Footſtools* of Power, who had domineer'd

neer'd in the Throne over others? Is not History full of the variety and calamity of Princes? How often they that have reigned over others, have been made subject to the vilest death by others? How often Families have been thrown out as well as Princes from their Thrones? and how the forms of Governments themselves have changed, and yet must the Map of their Magnificence be drawn out with the purple gore and blood of Mankind? Is it bravery to make the whole Earth a *Golgotha*, and to pave the *High-ways* with dead mens Skulls? to turn fenced Cities into ruinous heaps, and to endeavour, as far as they can, to destroy the Works of God, by erecting those of the Devil, whilst they seek to enravle this beauteous Frame, and to introduce the old *Chaos*? If these crested Plumes, swollen up with Cruelty and Carnage, have any pretence to Honour, and if those Arms, so destructive to Mankind, must be inrolled in the *Heraldry* of Fame, and painted out in Shields, I hope no sober mind can deny but this ought to be the Motto, *Vanity of vanities.*

And as in the empty bubbles of Honour, the puff-pastes of the pride of men, nothing is found but vanity, humane honour

nour not being in the honoured, but in the honouring, and ſo the great Potentates borrow their ſplendour from the meaneſt Peaſants and Vaſſals of them; ſo is vanity inſcribed on all the Treaſures of the Earth; for what is gold and ſilver but white and red Clay, made eſtimable only by the folly and covetouſneſs of men? What is there in the Pearls and precious Stones of the World more than in Beads and the Shells of Fiſhes, which ſome *Indians* are willing to purchaſe with expence of any the former, amongſt us accounted valuable? What is the difference between a Jewel and its counterfeit, but our uneven eſtimation? and what good is in all theſe, but from the vain conceits and common follies of mankind? 'Tis reported of the Emperor *Tiberius*, that he hanged an Artiſt who had made Glaſs to endure the ſtroke of the Hammer, *ne aurum præ vitra vileſceret*, leſt gold ſhould loſe its eſtimation; ſo careful was this *Prince* of the reputation of that metal, I need not ſay cruel or vain, both which the execution manifeſts.

There was a *Spaniſh* Merchant, who, obſerving what ſome Jewellers had gained by ſelling of Jewels, ſold all the Land and

and Goods he had to buy ſome; on the evening following, when he went to bed, he was diſturbed with this anxious thought (which kept him that night ſleepleſs) what if men ſhould return to their wits, and value theſe Pebbles at their true worth (which is nothing) I were then undone. This tormented him till he had ſold away what he ſo greedily had purchaſed; and did men conſider the vanity of Apparel, ſtript off from the backs of Birds, and Beaſts, and creeping Worms, who can but think every Plume of Feathers and every gawdy Dreſs to be all over *Vanity*, whilſt we, wrapped up in the Skins of Beaſts, think our ſelves more than men, and having ſtript all Animals and Vegetables for Cloathing, we prick up our ſelves and look big, as if thus apparelled, we triumphed over the whole Creation; forgetting our Wardrobes are filled with Moths, the devourer of all this Bravery, and not remembring the ruſt which is the Canker of our valued Metals, and all theſe laid up in places *where thieves may break through and ſteal*, and ſo deprive us of all thoſe Treaſures, which are hardly acquired with great difficulty, preſerved in ſolicitude of mind, and loſt with

with anguiſh and trouble of ſpirit, riches make themſelves wings and flye away; they are ſtyled uncertain riches, *riches often ſwallowed down and vomited up again*; often heaping up riches, and knows not who ſhall gather them, *riches are not for ever*, and yet for all this mans vain eye is not ſatisfied with riches, they are uncertain riches, therefore we are adviſed not to truſt in them, and they are ſuch things as are corrupt, and garments moth-eaten; what then are theſe things ſumm'd up, but truly nothing or ſomething worſe than that; that have an appearance of Treaſure, and are not ſo; that have an appearance of Bravery, as the triangular Glaſs hath of colours, yet indeed have none, that ſerve only to deceive, to abuſe, and to undo us; wherefore we may ſafely ſay of theſe, as the Poet did of Parentage,

Job 20. 15. Prov. 23. 24.

——*Vix ea noſtra voco.*

and maylabel the whole Inventory of theſe things with the Propoſition in the Text, *Vanity of vanities.*

But what if riches be vain, muſt pleaſures be ſo, thoſe brisk entertainments of Nature, the choice delights of the Sons of men? Were not the Cinque-ports of the

the Senſes made to entertain this, and is the ſatisfaction of them to no purpoſe? Did not the *Epicureans* hold the chief good to be in pleaſure? and could ſuch Learned men miſtake nothing for a ſuperlative Being? Who will ſhew us any good, is the voice of Nature, and if pleaſure be not ſo, what is? Doth not our Eccl. 11. 7. Preacher ſay in this Book; *Truly the light is ſweet, and a pleaſant thing it is for the eyes to behold the Sun.* Was it not pleaſant to behold *Solomon* in his *Royalty*, and is it not ſo to ſee the *Lillies* in the field better cloathed than he, when the *Spring* hath made the Earth like the Garden of *Eden*, deck'd with all things ſightly and comely, except the Tree of Life, and is the partaking of this rich Carpet, ſpread by the Divinity for our admiration and content, a vanity? Is not beauty a real good? the heart of man loveth nothing better; it is that which triumphed over the ſtrength of *Sampſon*, the holineſs of *David*, the wiſdom of *Solomon*, that which is ſtronger than *Wine*, or a *King*, is that *Vanity?* What are harmonious Sounds, the choice Compoſitions in Muſick, thoſe raviſhing Airs, which not only put Humanes in a rapture, but have a power to charm evil Spirits, and to promote

mote the effluſion of the good; are not theſe valuable, who could withſtand the voices of theſe Syrens, who had ears, whoſe ſweet chanting drew more effectually the hearers to them, than the Loadſtone Iron? theſe running upon the nimble wings of their will, that dull in moving without theſe, and is the touch and taſte leſs conſiderable? *Philoxenus* wiſhed his throat to have the length of a Cranes, that ſo the pleaſure of a taſte might be produced, and what the blandiſhment of the firſt ſtroke of theſe pleaſures did not effect, the lengthening of them might increaſe. Are thoſe Perfumes made by Nature, raiſed by Art empty things, which fill the noſtrils with delight and pleaſure? And if theſe be not great things, ſure the converſation of the witty are? Who would not hear the Eloquent longer than they could ſpeak, and to converſe with the wiſe? Wiſdom maketh a mans face to ſhine, and the hardneſs of his face ſhall be changed. Are not thoſe Verſes valuable, which have been eſteemed more worth than a Crown? Are not their handſom addreſſes and expreſſions of ſuch a tincture, as ſeem to threaten Time to do its worſt, and yet ſubſiſt, when ruſt hath eaten out the Braſs Sta-

tues, Water and Air conſumed Marble maſſes, yet theſe ſeem too hard for *Time* to chew, and ſeem to have a duration beyond the meaſure of it; if this be not great, what is? May not mirth be called a real good, and thoſe Feſtivities in diſcourſe, which make men forget ſorrow valuable? A *Feaſt* is made for *laughter*, ſays the *Preacher* himſelf; but, Alas! are not our ſenſes ſubject to miſtakes? are not their pleaſures quickly tranſient? The pleaſures of them are but points, the diſpleaſures of them Maps and Cards; we have pleaſure by grains, but pain by pounds; the pleaſure of them are bounded by ſatiety, the pains of them infinite: *The eye is not ſatisfied with ſeeing, nor the ear with hearing*, and if the light be pleaſant to the eyes; *If a man live many years, and rejoyce in them all, yet let him remember the days of darkneſs, for they ſhall be many. All that cometh is vanity*: and as for the Lillies of the field, they are made the examples of our frailty. *All fleſh is graſs, and all the glory therof as the flowers of the field, in the morning it is freſh and growing, in the evening cut down and withers.* Doth not Winter, as a rough attendant, take off the flouriſhing Carpet ſpread there by Summer, and give

Eccleſ. 7. 19.

Eccleſ. 11. 8.

give deaths ſtroke to all the flouriſhing verdure of the field, and make the glory thereof vaniſh? And what was *Solomons* bravery, which could not equal one *ſimple Flower*, nor apparel himſelf like *it*? How do theſe Vegetables vaniſh and expire, not only in our hands, but on the ſtalks that bear them.

Miraber celerem fugitivâ ætate ruinam,
Et dum naſcuntur conſenuiſſe roſas.

And for *Solomons* bravery, when at the beſt, he walked but as every man doth, in a vain ſhew; and as for beauty, the Preacher in my Text, who had experience of a thouſand of them, pronounceth that *vain*. What if the heart of man loveth much, *The Lord knows the thoughts of the wiſe to be vain*. And if the thoughts of the wiſe be ſo, we need not appeal to thoſe fools. What is that glittering earth, that thin appearance being but skin-deep, which men do ſo much dote on? how ſudden do diſeaſes, and how certainly doth time make it to appear vain; nay, did men inquire, they might often receive more mortifications from the very objects they admire. And by how much it is leſs reaſonable it ſhould, by ſo much it will trouble diſcerning men to ſee that which is ſo little to have an influence ſo

Pſal. 39. 6.

Prov. 31. 30.

1 Cor. 3. 20.

great, which yet proceeds not from the worth in it self in the examples instance, but by the weakness contracted by the sin of *Adam*, whereby mankind is apt to mistake the least appearance of good for the greatest; and, as Swine, delight to wallow even in the dirt and mire, as most suitable to sinful inclinations, and then 'tis not the Woman that reigns but the sin; 'tis not the Fly on the Coach-wheel that raiseth all this dust, but these trotting Lusts, which draw men to perdition; and as *the eye is not satisfied with seeing, so the ear is not with hearing*, unless it be with things that displease us. Sweet Sounds dye as soon as brought forth, and as the Swan warble out their own Elegies: and if a place be so favourable as to yield an Eccho to them, it is all, and by a long winged expression seem to make the Epitaph to the dying sound; and though *Davids* Musick seemed sometimes to relieve *Saul*, yet was the Devil too hard for the Harp, which had been too weak a Buckler to have saved *David* from *Sauls* Javelin, had not an overruling hand directed *Saul* to miss his mark. And for *Elisha*'s prophecying, excited by a Minstrel, 'tis probable it was none of the best Instruments, which may be conceived

Eccles. 1. 8.

1 Sam. 18. 11.

ceived by the Prophets indifferency in calling for any, not making choice of conſorts or perſons.

And for the Syrene voices, they are beholden to the Poets for improving them, who were willing to ſupport the defects of Nature by their Romantick ſupplements. As to the pleaſures of the touch or taſte, how ſhort are they to the oppoſites of them? pleaſures are feeble, pain forcible, the one momentary, the other fixed. And for *Philoxenus* his wiſh, it reaches no farther than to make a Glutton; when could he have perpetual appetite and conſtant food to entertain it? 'twould be ſo far from the felicity, that it might parallel the Poetical Fiction of *Tantalus* his torment in Hell, who was to have deſirable Fruits hang near his lips, but was not able to touch them. For what is the difference between not feeding and not filling. And as for Perfume, beſides the unhealthineſs of many of them, what ſerve they for but to make ill ſmells more odious. And as for witty Converſation, what is it but a froth which makes much ſhew, but has little ſubſtance. And for the wiſe, *how often are they taken in their own craft? Vain man would be wiſe, though he be born as a wild Aſſes Colt.* Job 11. 12. Job 5. 13.

Colt. God reſpecteth not any that are wiſe in heart, who turneth the wiſe man backward. *Every man is brutiſh by his own knowledge. Let not the wiſe man glory in his wiſdom.*

Jer. 51. 17.
Job 37. 24.

How rightly did old *Socrates* pronounce nullity of wiſdom upon all Mankind, when being declared by the Oracle to be the wiſeſt man of *Greece*, profeſſed that he did only know this, which other brain-ſick and conceited men did not, *That he knew nothing*; and now *where is the wiſdom of the wiſe, where is the Scribe, where is the diſputer of this world? The Lord knows the thoughts of the wiſe, that they are vain.* Even in thoſe Verſes, which the folly of ſome men have put too great a price on, what is their matter but words, Gibberiſh by common conſent made intelligible? and if their duration add to their commendation, ſin, cruelty and many enormous crimes can pretend to a laſting, even beyond theſe. What is there in that Ode of *Horace*, *Donec gratus eram tibi*, which *Scaliger* prefers before the Crown of *Perſia*, but a recantation of the ſwerving of its affection? And when we have extracted by the greateſt curioſity with our moſt earneſt induſtry, all that can be gathered from the wandring

Iſa. 44. 25.
1 Cor. 3. 20.

wits

wits of men, we may ſay with the Poet,

——*Vox & præterea nihil.*

And as to mirth, ye have an anſwer of the Preacher; *I have ſaid of laughter it is madneſs, and of mirth, what doſt thou? as the crackling of thorns under a pot, ſo is laughter of a fool, this alſo is vanity.* So as the pain we take to obtain pleaſure is abundantly out-weighed by the pains we ſuffer afterwards for it; man wearieth himſelf for that which doth not profit him: and as the Satyriſt ſaid of the *Patricians* in his time, whom years had made gray and not grave;

Et noſtrum iſtic vivere triſte vidimus,
Et nucibus facimus quæcunq; relictis.

So as when we have laboured and ſpent our ſubſtance to graſp that which we think good; theſe humane things, like Air and Apparitions, ſlip from us, and ſo we embrace a Cloud inſtead of *Juno*, and inherit only the wind, and in our embraces the Eaſt wind, which blows away all theſe things, leaving only behind the account of them, which is, *Vanity of vanities*; which leads me to the next particular, the Aſſertor, *ſaith the Preacher.*

It was ſaid long ſince, that the World was happy when Kings were Philoſophers, or Philoſophers Kings; and ſhould we

not think the World would be holy, when Preachers were Kings, or Kings Preachers? *Noah* was a Preacher of Righteouſneſs to a World hard of hearing, and here we have in the Text a King
Iſa. 1. 12. that is a Preacher, *I the Preacher was King over Iſrael in Jeruſalem.* Kings are not uſually Prophets nor Declamours againſt thoſe things which Courts do nurſe; yet there we have a King preaching, a King wiſer than other ſons of men, *Solomon* whoſe Wiſdom the Queen of *Sheba* came ſo far to hear. Who would not hear ſuch a Preacher? who would not give an attentive ear and an obedient heart to what King *Solomon* ſaid, *Yet behold a greater than Solomon is here.* For the ſame divine Spirit, which of old inſpired the Prophets, and afterwards the
1 Pet. 18, 19, 20. Apoſtles, and which preached to the old World in the Patriarch *Noah*, this divine Spirit by *Solomon* ſpeaking; who is ſo hard of hearing, that will not hear this? For, *if the words ſpoken by Angels were ſtedfaſt*, how ſhould this ſpoken by the Spirit of Chriſt be looked on? ſo as we may truly ſay, not only ſaid the Preacher, but thus ſaith the Lord, *Vanity of vanities, Vanity of vanities*; which brings me to the next Particular, the Duplication of the Aſſertion. When

When *Pharoahs* dream was doubled, *Joseph* told him, it was becauſe the thing was eſtabliſhed; divine Ecchoes are always ſignificant, and as always they ſhew the certainty, ſo uſually the importance by a repetition. *Pythagoras* offered a Hecatom for the duplication of the Cube; of how much greater value is this doubling of the Preacher, not terminated in a ſuperficial meaſuring of the outſides of bodies, but giving a true account of the intrinſick Nature, not only of humane bodies, but of worldly actions alſo? Vehement aſſeverations are made by duplications, *Verily, verily, I ſay unto you.* Chriſt foretold *Peter* before the Cock ſhould crow twice, he ſhould deny him thrice; and the duplication of the Cocks voice was a ſeaſonable Monitor of the Apoſtles fault, and to his repentance alſo. A ſingle expreſſion ſeems not enough to proclaim the vanity of worldly things, it muſt be ingeminated, God ſpeaketh once yea twice, and man perceiveth it not; in a Dream, in a Viſion of the night, when deep ſleep falleth upon men; but here he ſpeaketh to men awake, and doubleth what he ſaith, *Vanity of vanities, Vanity of vanities*: and ſo I deſcend to the laſt Particular, the Univerſality of the Aſſertion, *All is vanity.* That

That ſome things of the World are vain and illuſory, ſcarce any will deny; Children are cozened with Toys, men with Oaths *Liſander* ſaid of old; *Heraclitus* wept, *Democritus* laughed at the vain courſes held by men, and therefore were thought mad, by thoſe that indeed were little better; as ſober perſons will be looked upon in *Bedlam* amongſt the diſtracted. Mechanical Arts would not take it well to be counted vain; the Silver-Smiths at *Epheſus* held their crafts valuable, and rather than they ſhould be in danger, would put all in an uproar; and canonize the Fable of *Diana*'s Image as fallen from *Jupiter*, with a *Great is the Diana of the Epheſians.* Liberal Arts triumph as ſerious things; yet what is the Grammar but canting by Rule? What is Rhetorick but a Cadens of words chiming handſomly in the ear? What is Logick but a delfick Sword, which may be bent this way or that, and arm men by miſtaking Sophiſtry for Truth? How defective is Aſtronomy, which cannot teach us certainly, whether the Sun move or ſtand? How imperfect is Geometry, that cannot meaſure the diſtance between us and the Celeſtial bodies, nor give the exact proportion between a right Line and

a crooked? And how little is Arithmetick, that cannot find a number to the defects of Nature? *That which is wanting cannot be numbred.* Eccles. 1. 15. And what is Musick but a medly of Concords and Discords thrown on heaps, the judgment of which is as various as the Auditors? Hence *Midas* preferred *Pans* Whistle to *Apollo's* Viol; for what if Arts be vain, is not Physick divine, that can restore that which is near to death to health again? Alas! what are all Medicines, when rightly placed and prosperously succeed, but small differings of approaching death? *Meat for the belly, and the belly for meat, God shall destroy both it and them.* The Physician must die as well as his Patient, the caviling Lawyer as well as the cozened Client, the Line is drawn over all worldly things by the unerring Pencil, nothing is excepted; *Vanity of vanities,* (saith the Preacher) *all is vanity.*

This Position may be improved to cast into the Scale of the Sanctuary all worldly things, and that will inform us how light, how empty these are. A single vanity is not sufficient to express it, you have a Gradation, *Vanity of vanities.*

Secondly, It pointeth what estimation we should have of these things: no other than

than of Vanities, and that by Gradation, *Vanity of vanities.* The Aſſertor gives us the certainty of the Aſſertion; 'tis not the ſaying of an ignorant man; nor is it ſaid probably or problematically, but poſitively, *ſaith the Preacher,* ſaid he who had Wiſdom above all Mortals. But this is not all, ſays he, who is the Wiſdom of God, by the Pen of *Solomon,* who made all Mortals, ſo as this truth is not to be doubted, being uttered by the God of Truth, *Vanity of vanities, Vanity of vanities* (ſaith the Preacher.)

From the Duplication we may draw the importance of the truth as well as the certainty thereof; and therefore we ſhould be doubly diligent to awaken our hearts, to quell the inordinate love of earthly things, to ſee the emptineſs and nothingneſs of them lively expreſſed in the twice vanity thereof; to remember to abſtain from thoſe fleſhly vanities which fight againſt the ſoul; to double the files of our thoughts, and fortifie our imaginations againſt being carried away with the trifles and dotages of this World, with the empty Pomps and petty Pageantry of Wax and Parchment, of the fading breaths and falſe acclamations of men, or with fleeting things, which ſometimes

times attend a waſting life, the neceſſary Uſhers to a certain death; to know we are here as ſtrangers and pilgrims, travellers, not dwellers, ſuch as death will draw from our houſes, or adverſity them from us; to winde up our bottom upon ſtable things, to ſee the difference between counterfeit Ware and true Riches, between worldly Pelf and everlaſting Righteouſneſs, between the deceit of appearances and reality of good, between walking in a vain ſhow, and waiting for *a new Heaven and a new Earth, wherein dwells Righteouſneſs.*

From the Univerſality of the Aſſertion we may learn, that it is not one or two particular things which are *Vanity*; the whole Syſtem of worldly things, *the Creature it ſelf is ſubject to vanity, and groaneth under the bondage of corruption:* So that it is not this or that, but *all is vanity*; and not ſingly ſo, but in gradation, *Vanity of vanities.* Whatſoever good appears is momentany and unſatisfactory; whence it is, that humane deſires hunt after varieties, inidentities, and pleaſe themſelves with ſomewhat new, though there be nothing ſo but what number makes. *Pliny* ſpeaks of ſome Inhabitants in *Aſia*, who not wearied with adverſity, but

but ſurfeited with proſperities of this life, tired with the repetition of earthly things, caſt themſelves into the Sea to avoid an irkſom life, which doing the ſame things ſo many thouſand times over and over, make that to them intolerable, which moſt of Mankind do eſteem deſirable. Where then ſhould we place our thoughts, ſeeing nothing is to be found here but *Vanity of vanities*; but *on that City which has foundation, whoſe builder and maker is God.* That leaving the purſuit of theſe earthly trifles, we may be mortified, not only toward all evil, but toward all earthly things, that ſo aſcending in our thoughts, and aſpiring by our endeavours to ſurmount this World, and to get the aſcendant as to our appetites towards theſe tranſitory things, we may arrive at that bleſſed Region, where there is no Time but Eternity, no Accurant but Felicity, no Change but Perpetuity, and where there is no Vanity but a bleſſed Stability, where an infinite good ſhall everlaſtingly entertain ſuch as have wiſely judged, and righteouſly walked in this World, *with thoſe Joys that are at his right hand for evermore, which neither eye hath ſeen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of*

man hath conceived. So as they that have walked as they ſhould in this Valley of Tears, ſhall be there transfigured and tranſplanted into eternal Glory. Which God of his infinite mercy grant us all for his Son Jeſus Chriſt's ſake, to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghoſt, be all Glory and Honour. *Amen.*

FINIS.